



## WEBINAR SUMMARY

### Humanitarian Development Nexus: What is the New Way of Working?

#### Part 2

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#### Panellists

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The majority of humanitarian operations around the world are protracted, with humanitarian appeals lasting for 7 years on average. Humanitarian emergencies can no longer be viewed as short-term events, as they are often manifestations of structural and complex socio-economic developments. In addressing these situations, the linkages between humanitarian and development plans and operations are often weak or absent. For example, humanitarian planning cycles are typically annual and do not easily fit with longer-term development planning processes. The World Humanitarian Summit emphasised the need to bridge the gap between humanitarian relief and development. With this in mind, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) generated the “New Way of Working” (NWoW) which aims to address the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. But, concretely, what is the “New Way of Working”? Is it just a new label or is it a game changer that will bridge the divide and ensure that humanitarian and development action are mutually reinforcing? This is a summary of the webinar on the New Way of Working Part 2.



##### Mr. John Ging

Director of Operations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

#### QUESTION: How is the New Way of Working different from previous efforts at addressing the Humanitarian-Development Nexus?

As most conflicts are protracted, demands on humanitarian relief have expanded while development gains have been negatively impacted. The NWoW is a renewed effort at addressing the division between immediate lifesaving humanitarian relief and longer-term development assistance (i.e. the humanitarian-development nexus). The NWoW builds on lessons learned from past endeavours and realises that short, medium, and longer-term support needs to be provided to vulnerable people concurrently, in a ‘contiguum’. This time, what is different is the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitment by humanitarian and development actors to work towards collective outcomes around the reduction of needs over multiple years. The NWoW appears to have greater support and commitment from different actors from across the board (humanitarian, development, civil society, financial institutions, governments, etc.) than previous efforts to address the issue, including the World Bank who has committed to engaging earlier and more robustly in fragile humanitarian settings.

## QUESTION: What are some practical steps to implement the New Way of Working at the field level?

The specific challenges involved in applying the NWoW will depend on the context. Field colleagues interested to implement the NWoW should discuss within their HCT and UNCT to review opportunities based on the context in each country. To translate into better results for people and effectively reduce needs and vulnerability, the UNCT and HCT need to think about what programmes need to be re-designed, implemented or scaled up to lead to a reduction in needs - and not focus overly on process. There are two key steps to kick off the process:

1. **Support joint analysis of needs, vulnerabilities, and risks, and of capacities to address them.** Humanitarian and development actors need to share their information and analyses to arrive at a shared understanding of the situation that needs to be addressed.
2. **Develop collective outcomes to reduce needs, vulnerabilities, and risk, and identify activities needed to achieve them.** Planning and programming need to be joined-up, as humanitarian and development actors do not work independently of each other in a vacuum. Humanitarian and development actions should be complementary in order to achieve collective outcomes, avoid gaps in programming, and minimise duplication. Donors have a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting development programmes that are more adaptable, risk-tolerant and risk-informed which will be critical to reduce vulnerability and risk in fragile and crisis affected contexts.

## QUESTION: Does the New Way of Working take into consideration the political/peace and stability context?

The NWoW acknowledges that collective outcomes can contribute to sustaining peace and that peace and stability are important for reducing humanitarian needs. However, the main purpose of humanitarian action is to address life-saving needs and alleviate suffering, and so cannot be driven by political end or purpose: to do so would risk politicizing humanitarian action and compromising the humanitarian principles that allow humanitarians to work and reach those most in need. Coherence and coordination within the UN system in support of peace consolidation is grounded in the UN Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) policy, which outlines important guiding principles, including respect for humanitarian principles. The IAP is still an appropriate framework and is in the process of being updated.

## QUESTION: How can the nexus work in non-government controlled areas?

Humanitarian actors already operate in areas under the control of non-state actors or de-facto authorities, and their presence is often possible due to their strict adherence to the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. However, this is more difficult for development organisations whose work is based on a strong partnership with, consent of, and support to governments, and many development actors will not be in a position to be physically present or pursue such interventions at scale in areas outside of government control. This is not to say development actors cannot work in areas controlled by de-facto authorities. Some partners have found ways to continue to do community-based development in such environments thanks to certain donors who are supporting more risk-tolerant and flexible programming. But their added value and potential impact on working in these areas need to be carefully considered and their modus operandi needs to be adapted to the context.



**Ms. Marta Ruedas**  
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Sudan

## QUESTION: What steps did you take to bring humanitarian and development actors and programs closer?

1. **Mind shift and joint analysis.** The main challenge in addressing the humanitarian-development nexus is not to bring humanitarian and development actors together *per se*, since most agencies across the spectrum are already double-hatted. Rather, it is to link humanitarian and development programming as organically as possible, where and when possible. In Sudan, we created the position of Humanitarian-Development Nexus Advisor in the RC/HC office (in the spirit of the 'People's pipeline' mentioned by Assistant Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu during the [webinar on the NWoW Part 1](#)) and established RC/HC Senior Advisory Team to facilitate joint analysis, planning, and programming.
2. **Instruments that facilitate a coherent humanitarian-development response.** In Sudan, we postponed the development of a new UNDAF to allow a Multi-Year Humanitarian Strategy (MYHS) to develop simultaneously. The multi-year nature of the humanitarian strategy provided a broader perspective from which to look at chronic issues in the appropriate context e.g. addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition rather than its symptoms). In Sudan there is also a Joint

IASC Sector and UNDAF Results Group meeting to make sure humanitarian and development plans are mutually reinforcing. We also have a joint OCHA/RCO Information management Working Group to make sure information, upon which decisions are based, relates to common baselines and indicators and are inter-changeable to the degree possible. There has also been a Humanitarian-Development Nexus/Coordination Review Mission composed of Global Cluster Leads, the IASC Task Team on the Nexus in Protracted Crisis, and the UNDG Working Group on Transition, to unpack the NWoW in the context of Sudan. The mission resulted in a set of recommendations and suggestions for the country team and partners to further develop steps to achieve collective outcomes.

3. **World Bank engagement and durable solutions.** Funding from the UN-World Bank Partnership Trust fund for the Humanitarian Development Peace initiative (HDP initiative) has provided better-informed durable solutions for IDPs. The initiative has provided stronger quantitative data on poverty which will inform joint strategies and plans to support IDPs in a more sustainable manner.
4. **Regular engagement with the donor community.** Working with the donor community ensures more coherent financing in line with NWoW and the Grand Bargain. In Sudan, we benefited from a financing mission composed of the OECD, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), and OCHA, to support the development of a financing strategy that is more coherently in line with collective outcomes. We also have regular joint 'humanitarian' and 'development' donor meetings to underpin how donor funding can support the NWoW

### QUESTION: What are some lessons learned from implementing the New Way of Working in Sudan?

- **Drastic measures will be counter-productive, while slow, incremental change will not sufficiently change the way we work.** The NWoW needs to be done seriously but not radically. We need to avoid adding additional layers to an already multi-layered humanitarian and development system and make sure the system that exists adapts its way of working to enable development interventions to address the suffering caused by humanitarian crises, alongside traditional humanitarian actors. Development funding also need to support this new way of thinking/working.
- **Ambition and innovation.** We need to have a clear vision of where we want to get to. It is always uncomfortable to change one's way of working, but by challenging ourselves and helping each other out, it makes it easier. Humanitarian Reform, the Transformative Agenda, and other processes have brought improvements to the humanitarian system, but we cannot deny that we are still discussing the same fundamental issues at country level; for example, the discussion about financing is also largely still the same. We have to be courageous to challenge ourselves and to leave our comfort zone, and the donor community has to do the same.
- **Change how we work, collectively. We need to adapt the way we work to become more relevant and to be more effective in responding to needs.** This change has started in Sudan where humanitarian and development actors have agreed on collective outcomes to their work, which are identified as priorities in both the HRP and the UNDAF.
- **Establish coordination structures to enable organic shift** in how we address issues pertaining to humanitarian, recovery, and development. This does not mean bringing everything under one structure. Rather, it means greater flexibility in how to engage on issues than currently exists. Additionally, operations need to be determined by the needs of people rather than institutional mandates or systematic labels such as development or humanitarian. **Structures need to suit the agenda.**
- **Flexible funding.** Multi-annual funding commitments are crucial: Too often aid actors cannot move with sufficient flexibility and timeliness from humanitarian programming to recovery or development programming, because of structural impediments on the donor side and the humanitarian side. Nonetheless **the fundamental issue is not lack of funding, per se, but two ways of working that are not compatible enough to facilitate the organic shift between humanitarian and development programming.**